

Request for Proposals 2022

Funding Opportunity: DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ENGLISH ACCESS MICROSCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR PALESTINIAN STUDENTS, 2022-2024

Announcement Type: Sub-Award for Cooperative Agreement with FHI360

Funding Amount: Tentative Amount of \$1,850,000. To be finalized at a later date

CFDA: 19.040

Opening Date: August 25, 2022

Closing Date: October 5, 2022

Program: English Access Microscholarship Program

The U.S. Office of Palestinian Affairs of the U.S. Embassy Jerusalem

E-mail: JerusalemPDJApplications@state.gov

Background:

In order to build stronger cultural links between the U.S. and host countries around the globe, the U.S. Department of State created the English Access Microscholarship Program (Access) in 2004. Access provides youth from economically disadvantaged communities with English language and other global citizenship skills that improve educational and employment prospects, build stronger self-esteem, and provide a deeper multi-cultural understanding. The program serves as a viable educational model for communities with components in leadership, creative and critical thinking, information technology, and civic outreach. Participants, usually between the ages of 13-20, are expected to play active roles in their country's socio-economic development and have greater opportunities to engage in a dialogue to resolve local and global challenges. Since its inception in 2004, over 203,500 students in more than 75 countries have participated in the Access Program. There are more than 14,000 Palestinian Access alumni, many of who are studying at, or have graduated from, top-tier universities throughout the country and abroad.

Project Description:

The goal of the Access Program is to provide a foundation of English language skills to bright, economically-disadvantaged Palestinian students that improves their future academic and employment prospects while exposing them to U.S. culture and values. The program introduces participants to critical thinking and problem solving skills and promotes access to information in English; improves their potential to fully contribute to the socio-economic development of their countries and their own 21st century jobs; and increases their ability to compete for and participate in U.S. exchange and study programs.

The English language instruction component should break from traditional models to deliver a more meaningful, interactive language learning experience centered on the learner. Project-based and experiential approaches should be employed in order to help the learner use English to understand, discuss, and resolve authentic local and global challenges. Enhancement and off-site immersion activities should help extend the language learning experience beyond the classroom walls. Civic outreach activities should further cement the connection between the Access Program and community.

The various aspects of the Access Program are:

After-School/Weekend Instruction

The Access Program must deliver 360 hours of total instruction. The first component of the 360 hours should be in English classes meeting outside of school hours, preferably twice per week. The majority of the program's hours will be in this component. Classes typically last from 1.5 to 3 hours. It is the responsibility of the Educational Provider to consider the schedule of the students, especially during the initial recruitment phase, to ensure that Access classes do not interfere with students' regular school schedule.

Enhancement Activities

The second component of the 360 total hours will be enhancement activities. These activities are aimed at fostering U.S.-Palestinian cross-cultural understanding; promoting civic engagement through community service and advocacy projects; and instilling leadership skills. These activities are an opportunity for educators and students to be creative and extend the learning experience beyond the classroom walls. Trips to museums, workplaces, theaters, etc. are encouraged. Other possibilities include civic outreach activities such as volunteering at a nearby senior citizens home or organizing the cleaning of a nearby park or forest. In-school activity possibilities include filming role-plays, hosting a visiting speaker from the U.S. Embassy or local community, creating a web page in the computer lab, creating a program newspaper or celebrating a key U.S. holiday such as Thanksgiving.

It is recommended to have a minimum of at least one enhancement activity per month. The hours used for such activities will be counted as part of the total number of hours of instruction. Enhancement activities are usually between 1.5 to 4 hours.

Intensive Sessions

The third component of the 360 hours of program instruction are intensive sessions. These can be conducted at the same location as regular instruction hours or can be held off-site to create more opportunity for students to bond with their classmates. Intensive sessions are often one to four-week long summer programs but may also occur over consecutive weekends or between semesters. The sessions are usually 4-8 hours a day. Like the enhancement activities discussed above, these hours are also counted toward the total 360 hours of the program. The aim of these sessions is to provide students with time to fully experience an English-medium environment outside of the classroom for a sustained period. A typical day consists of a variety of team-building, problem-solving, and creative activities that allow the students to gain confidence in English and to consolidate the civic engagement and leadership skills that they have been learning during the entire program.

Teacher Professional Development

Finally, regular training opportunities and the sharing of best practices within the Access teacher community are an important facet of the Access Program. Access instructors typically teach at other Palestinian educational institutes in addition to their work with Access. Investment in their professional development not only elevates the level of instruction in the Access classroom, but also raises the level of English language teaching in the wider Palestinian education community.

In Country Educational Service Provider: Roles and Responsibilities

Proposal Eligibility Requirements:

Proposals may be submitted by local, U.S.-based or international non-profit, educational organizations.

Number of providers:

The U.S. Embassy's Office of Palestinian Affairs reserves the right to split the project between two or more providers.

Program Implementation Locations:

The U.S. Office of Palestinian Affairs aims to reach Palestinian students across Gaza, the West Bank, and Jerusalem through the Access Program. The current Access Program includes 15 sites: Jerusalem, Ramallah, Nablus, Qalqiliya, Tulkarem, Jenin, Salfit, Jericho, Bethlehem, Hebron, Gaza City, Rafah, Khan Younis, Middle Camps (Gaza), and North Gaza. Providers can submit proposals with multiple implementation locations, though some providers who specialize in one geographic area or audience may submit proposals for a single program site. The proposal should cover the sites where the Provider is confident it can deliver a safe space, with a qualified administrative and teaching staff, over the duration of the program. Each site should have no more than 20 students per class. Clean and safe premises for high school aged students is a non-negotiable requirement.

Audience:

Palestinian Access program participants are typically entering 9th or 10th grade at the start of the 2-year program. The age range of students in a class should not be more than two years, e.g. 14-16, 15-17, etc. Ideally, students should finish the program before they commence studies for the Tawjihi exam, as they will have little extra time to focus. Proposals targeting other ages, such as university students or young professionals, will be considered.

Program Calendar:

The start date of the program will depend largely on the length of the negotiation, contract finalization, and student selection phases. The program should begin in late fall 2022/winter 2023. The total length of the program which will include program start-up, teacher and student selection, and total instruction hours will last no longer than 24 months. Providers must prepare themselves to be as flexible as possible with regard to start dates due to issues that may occur before an agreement is signed.

Technical and infrastructure requirements:

The provider must specify the location(s) of the Access Program and space that will be used for the classes and activities. The provider must either provide verification that the space belongs to the grantee or a written agreement with the holder of the space. The space must have seating for 20 students; it must have a blackboard/whiteboard, power outlet, and minimal sanitary requisites. The space should also have Internet capability (or the grantee should consider providing for this separately). Providers are also encouraged to share any other unique learning spaces on the premises that are accessible to the program and that add to the overall experience (theater, garden, sports facility, etc.).

Functional requirements:

- a) In consultation with U.S. Embassy Jerusalem's Office of Palestinian Affairs and the Regional English Language Office (RELO) Jerusalem, the provider is responsible for setting criteria for and identifying "economically disadvantaged youth" to be enrolled in the program.
- b) The provider is responsible for identifying and recruiting qualified teachers.

- c) The provider is required to produce frequent reports (usually quarterly) and a substantial final performance report. The provider should monitor students' attendance and performance.
- d) The provider will submit regular highlights, with photos, based on criteria provided later.
- e) The provider will monitor classes and activities to ensure quality of the program. It is therefore recommended that providers have a staff member with a background in education or English language instruction.
- f) The provider will maintain records on graduates that will be added to the U.S. Embassy PAU Alumni database in order to include them in follow-on programming.

Assumptions and agreements:

Providers can craft proposals of varying size with a budget ceiling of \$1,850,000, depending on the Provider's capability, infrastructure, and geographic spread. The Office of Palestinian Affairs reserves the right to split the project between two or more providers and may request providers to adjust their final proposals and budgets as necessary. All possible costs for parents – instruction, books/materials, transportation, enhancement activities, administration, food and accommodation – should be covered. Please see the budget section below for more information on these items.

It is preferable that teachers have degrees or diplomas in English language teaching or education and a minimum of two years' experience teaching English full-time. The instructors should be comfortable and fluent in English and have some cross-cultural experience; preferably with U.S. culture (familiarity with the culture is stressed over actually having visited the U.S.). Teachers should have progressive views about methodology, employing learning-centered approaches that focus on tasks and projects that lead to interactive classes. Teachers should be adept at integrating modern technology into the classroom, and at creating a comfortable risk-taking atmosphere that allows students to learn in a non-competitive and intellectually stimulating environment.

Submission information: Proposals should be submitted to the U.S. Office of Palestinian Affairs' Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy Jerusalem, JerusalemPDJApplications@state.gov. The deadline for submission is September 12, 2022.

Basis for award of the agreement:

The provider should be an established non-profit institution or a non-governmental organization (NGO) with at least 2 years of experience in administering educational programs and/or teaching English, preferably to the target age group. The grantee must have access to an established core of English teachers willing to commit their time to this project. The grantee must identify the location(s) and venue(s) that will be used for this program (verified with a document/preliminary agreement) and will be responsible for recruiting students and, in consultation with the Regional English Language Office, developing the curriculum.

Format of the proposal:

- (A) Narrative: A narrative document in English, no longer than ten pages, that describes the program in detail is required. This document should include a description of: 1) the provider/organization and staff who will be involved in the program; 2) plan for the afterschool/weekend classes, enhancement activities and intensive sessions; 3) student recruitment and retention plan; 4) specific student audiences and ages; 5) materials/textbooks to be used; 6) monitoring plan; 7) teacher recruitment and professional development plan; 8) program location(s); 9) any other information the provider feels is relevant to communicate how they will administer the program.

- (B) Budget: The provider should use the FY17 Access budget template as a model for the budget submission and also provide a budget narrative. The budget spreadsheet should include the following required categories:
- a) Instruction: teacher salaries. Please indicate direct hire vs. contractors.
 - b) Books/Materials: textbooks, supplementary instructional materials for students and teachers, Students' school supplies
 - c) Transportation: cost of transporting students and teachers as necessary to and from their Access classes
 - d) Enhancement Activities: expenses for enhancement activities may include supplies and must be related to a specific Access project, e.g. celebrating an American holiday, opening ceremony or graduation
 - e) Administration: The administrative cost may include staff compensation for work directly related to the Access program such as Program Administrator, Program Coordinators, Accountants, administrative office supplies, contractors, Access classroom rental, office telephone, reporting software requirements (Microsoft Excel 2010 or newer), bank fees, wire fees, etc. Please elaborate on the specific administration costs beyond the basic line item requested in the budget template.
 - f) Food: Providers will have an opportunity to request costs to provide students with food during after school and/or intensive session instruction by providing a one-paragraph justification for consideration within the Access proposal.
 - g) Accommodation: Providers will have an opportunity to request costs associated with accommodation for students during intensive sessions (not for after school instruction) by providing a one-paragraph justification for consideration within the Access proposal.

Evaluation Criteria

Criteria considered by the review committee will include, but may not be limited to:

- Provider's geographic reach
- Scholarship cost per student
- Number of scholarships offered
- Nature of curriculum and alignment with U.S. government goals (student-centered instruction to promote usage of the language; increasing familiarity with the U.S.; and developing critical thinking, problem-solving, and leadership skills.)
- Access to a reliable core of qualified English teachers
- Ability to attract students from the target demographic
- Ability to provide safe and well-equipped classroom facilities

Additional information:

For additional information or questions, please contact the Office of Palestinian Affairs' Public Affairs Section at U.S. Embassy Jerusalem by writing to JerusalemPDJApplications@state.gov.

Registration Requirements:

For all proposals that are accepted: To apply for federal funding, organizations, whether based in or outside the U.S., must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number, currently referred to as a DUNS number, and an active account with the System for Award Management (SAM). This applies to both prime applicants and any local partners receiving federally funded sub-awards. Applicants who do not meet all registration requirements are not eligible for funding under this NOFO.

Substantial Involvement: The U.S. Embassy Office of Palestinian Affairs and the Regional English Language Office may be involved in the program and management performance of any cooperative agreement through consultation and technical collaboration on specified project activities.